

A note on Mahāmahātaka Caṇḍeśvara Ṭhakkura of Mithilā.—By MR. JUSTICE SARADA CHARAN MITRA.

[Read 7th December, 1904.]

Caṇḍeśvara Ṭhakkura is known to Anglo-Indian lawyers as the author of the Vivāda-Ratnākara, which and the Vivāda-Cintāmaṇi are the leading authorities of the Mithilā school of the Mitākṣarā system of Hindu Law. But to Sanskrit scholars Caṇḍeśvara is known as the author of the *Sapta-Ratnākara* of which the Vivāda-Ratnākara is only a part. As the name implies, the Ratnākara consists of seven parts. The duties and obligations of man in their widest sense are divided by the author into seven parts, and those regarding property form the subject of the Vivāda-Ratnākara. The other parts of the Ratnākara are Kṛtya, Dāna, Vyavahāra, Suddhi, Pūjā and Gṛhastha.

Of the seven Ratnākaras, the Vivāda only is now accessible in translation in English. Babus Golapa Chandra Sarkara Sastri, M.A., B.L., and Digambara Chattopadhyaya, M.A., B.L., Vakils of the Calcutta High Court, published in the year 1899, in Devanāgarī, the original text of the Vivāda with a translation in English. The learned gentlemen have not been able to give us much information regarding Caṇḍeśvara Ṭhakkura or his family. He was himself a minister of a Raja of Mithilā named Hara Simh or Hari Simh of the Karṇāṭa Kṣatriya family; he was a son of Vireśvara Ṭhakkura who was also a minister; he was living in the year 1314 A.D = 1236 (Sāka Era) when he performed the *tulā* ceremony. These are facts which appear from the concluding passage of the Ratnākara, in which Caṇḍeśvara is called the Somnāth of the North.

रसशिखिभुजचन्द्रे सम्मिते शाकवर्षे
सहसि धवलपद्मे वाग्वती सिन्धुतीरे ।
अदित तुलितमुच्चैरात्मना स्वर्णराशिं
निधिरखिलगुणानामुत्तरः सोमनाथः ॥

These were the only facts known about the author of the *Sapta-Ratnākara* in the year 1899.

During my recent travels in the Mithilā country, I have with the help of the Honorable Maharaja Rameswara Singh Bahadur of Darbhanga, who is not only the chief of all Mithilā Brahmans but is also a great patron of Sanskrit learning, been able to collect some

information regarding Caṇḍeśvara and his family. In this as well as in other matters regarding my investigations into the ancient literature of Mithilā to which Bengal owes much, I have also derived considerable assistance from my friend Mr. N. Gupta who kindly accompanied me.

Caṇḍeśvara Ṭhakkura belonged to an ancient and learned family of Mithilā Brahmans. They came originally from a village called Visai and were known as Viṣaibar Brahmans. The village Viṣai cannot now be identified. It is very probable that Caṇḍeśvara was born at Viṣai. Some of the members of the family now reside at Saurāṭ (Saurāṣṭra), and it is said they shifted there from their original place of residence. They cannot give us any information when the family migrated.

Caṇḍeśvara's grand-father, Devāditya, was the prime-minister of a Raja of Mithilā—probably Raja Hara Simh's father whose name was Śakra Simh. The Raja was a feudatory of Alāuddīn Khiljī, the Afghan Sultan of Delhi, who reigned from 1295 to 1315 A.D. The Raja and his prime-minister are said to have taken a leading part in 1295 A.D. against Hamvira Deva of Raṅstambha which was besieged and taken in that year. These facts are borne out by a passage in the *Kṛtya-Cintāmani* by Caṇḍeśvara himself.

Raja Hara Simh, as appears from the *Pañji* caused to be compiled and first introduced by him, was born in the year 1216 (Śāka Era), and the *Pañji* was first introduced 32 years later, *i.e.*, 1348 A.D. Caṇḍeśvara performed the *Tulā* ceremony in 1314 A.D. Raja Hara Simh must have been young at the time, having succeeded his father at an early age.

Devāditya had seven sons—Vireśvara, Dhīreśvara, Guṇeśvara, Jateśvara, Haradatta, Lakṣmīśvara and Śubhadatta. The eldest Vireśvara, was one of the ministers of the Raja of Mithilā, but whether of Raja Śakra Simh or Raja Hari Simh does not clearly appear. He is known to Sanskrit scholars as the author of *Chāndoga-Paddhati*, also called *Daśakarma-Paddhati*. This book has been recently published with notes by Paṇḍit Parameśvara Jha, a learned scholar of Mithilā attached to the *Darbār* of the Mahārāja of Darbhanga. Amongst other works, Vireśvara caused a big tank to be excavated in village Dahi-bhata which is still called "Vīrśawara" after his name. This tank is in the vicinity of the Pandoul Factory.

Caṇḍeśvara was the eldest son of Vireśvara and was one of the famous men of his time both as a minister and as a scholar. As prime minister he held a position next to the Raja and was celebrated for his diplomatic talents. It is said that Raja Hara Simh on one occasion declined to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Afghan Emperor of Delhi who advanced against him with a large army. The Raja

fled to Nepal. Babu Prasanna Kumar Tagore says in his preface to the Vivāda Cintāmaṇi that Hara Siṃh became Raja of Simroon in 1323 A.D. after it had been taken by Tughlak Shāh. The big tank at Darbhanga near the Railway Station known as Harari or Harsayar is said to have been excavated at the instance of Hari Siṃh's minister.

The name of Caṇḍeśvara has, however, come down to us for his great works, the Ratnākara and Kṛtya Cintāmaṇi. Mr. Colebrooke in his preface to the Digest of Hindu Law on Contracts and Successions (1798 A.D.) says, 'The Vivāda-Ratnākara was compiled under the superintendence of Caṇḍeśvara' and so it bears the latter's name in the same way as Trebonian's great work that of Justinian. But the learned scholars of Mithilā have always ascribed the work to Caṇḍeśvara himself who was undoubtedly a scholar of great repute. I may quote the following śloka on the point :—

श्रीकृत्यदानव्यवहारशुद्धि-
पूजाविवादेशु तथा गृहस्ये ।
रत्नाकरा रत्नसुवो निबद्धाः
कृतास्तुजापुरुषदेन सप्त ॥

Instances of Rajas and their ministers having been authors or commentators of great reputation are not rare in India. It seems to me that there is no inherent improbability in the widely accepted belief that Caṇḍeśvara was the actual writer of the books that bear his name.

Vireśvara's second son Dhīreśvara was also a great Paṇḍit. Vidyāpati Ṭhakkura the great bard of Mithilā and the author of the Puruṣa-parikṣā and Durgābhaktitarāṅginī was his great-grandson. One of their living descendants is Badri Nath Ṭhākur who is sixteenth in descent from Dhīreśvara and thirteenth from Vidyāpati. He and his collaterals now live at Saurāṭ.

Vireśvara's third son, Guṇeśvara, was also a minister, and his son Rāmadatta was known as a learned writer.